



PRESS RELEASE

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## NEI sets human rights, inequality, net zero, nature as focus themes for corporate engagement

- Focus theme topics include digital rights, human capital, reducing methane emissions, and deforestation
- 40 companies identified for engagement include Apple, Meta, Johnson & Johnson, Lowe's, Microsoft, NextEra Energy, Taiwan Semiconductor, and Canada's banks
- Focus List companies account for 20% of NEI equity assets under management as of February 28, 2023

TORONTO, March 23, 2023 – NEI Investments (“NEI”) published today its annual Focus List, a guide to the environmental, social, and governance (“ESG”) themes NEI has prioritized for corporate dialogue this year. The Focus List identifies the companies NEI intends to engage with on the topical ESG issues of human rights, inequality, net-zero alignment, and nature.

The Focus List is a cornerstone of the active ownership component of NEI's longstanding responsible investment program, which brings together three main activities: corporate dialogue, proxy voting, and shareholder proposals. It also includes a summary of NEI's planned policy activities and expectations.

Published annually since 2002, the Focus List gives asset managers, financial advisors, institutional and retail investors, and other stakeholders an opportunity to review the progress NEI is making toward improving investment value and building a more sustainable future.

“It is important that we provide our clients and other stakeholders the ability to monitor and measure our corporate engagement progress and the results of our efforts,” said Adelaide Chiu, Vice President and Head of Responsible Investing & ESG Services at NEI Investments. “Our transparency in this regard is a hallmark of our active ownership program, and we are proud to continue it with the latest edition of our Focus List.”

“Thoughtful investors concerned with the long-term sustainability of their investments can have a significant impact on the ESG strategy and performance of companies,” said Jamie Bonham, Head of Stewardship at NEI Investments. “Our active ownership program holds the tools we use on behalf of clients to make that impact, with the goal of improving their investment outcomes.”

NEI's approach to active ownership incorporates internationally recognized principles and frameworks such as the Principles for Responsible Investment, the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, the OECD Guidelines, and the UN Sustainable Development Goals.



## **Four themes for 2023**

### **Human rights**

We firmly believe there is an onus on businesses to integrate respect for human rights into their operations. Our discussions this year will be focused on two main areas: human rights in the supply chain, and digital rights. Companies in focus include Alphabet, Apple, and Meta Platforms.

### **Inequality**

Inequality takes on different dimensions as it cuts across sectors in various ways. Over the years this systemic issue has required us to use the full suite of tools available to us as responsible investors. This year we will emphasize four core issues: human capital; diversity, equity and inclusion; equitable compensation; and equitable access. Companies in focus include AbbVie, Johnson & Johnson, and some of Canada's big banks.

### **Net-zero alignment**

Last year was, to say the least, a tumultuous one for the energy transition, with war, precedent-setting climate legislation, and extreme weather events. Our core topics are net-zero commitments and transition plans, reducing methane emissions, circularity, and mitigating supply chain impacts. Companies in focus include AltaGas, Canadian Natural Resources, and NextEra Energy.

### **Nature**

Our society has done a poor job acknowledging the value of natural capital, and of managing it. Over the past few years NEI has placed greater focus on nature and biodiversity in our approach to active ownership, so that we can have a positive influence on this growing area of concern. Our core topics for 2023 are impact and dependency assessment, and deforestation. Companies in focus include Bank Rakyat Indonesia, Canadian Tire, and Taiwan Semiconductor.

Download a copy of the full Focus List and Focus List summary from NEI's website:

<https://www.neiinvestments.com/responsible-investing/responsible-investing-expertise/reports/focus-list.html>

## **About NEI Investments**

NEI Investments is a Canadian asset manager specializing in responsible investing, with over \$10 billion under management. With over 30 years of firm experience, NEI is committed to providing Canadian investors with a broad range of responsible investment solutions. The company delivers disciplined, active asset management with a focus on environmental, social, and governance (ESG) factors. NEI Investments also manages and operates a proprietary active ownership program, and has been a signatory of the United Nations' Principles for Responsible Investment for more than 15 years. NEI Investments is a wholly owned subsidiary of Aviso Wealth.



## About Aviso Wealth

Aviso Wealth is a leading wealth services supplier for the Canadian financial industry, helping hundreds of institutional and retail organizations gain a competitive edge through a comprehensive offering of investment dealer and insurance services supporting thousands of financial advisors across Canada. Aviso Wealth's asset manager, NEI Investments, is a Canadian leader in responsible investment funds and portfolios, and its award-winning online brokerage, Qtrade Direct Investing™, enables self-directed investors to build their wealth with confidence. Aviso Correspondent Partners provides custodial and carrying broker services to portfolio managers, investment dealers, insurance and trust companies, and introducing brokers.

With over \$105 billion in assets under administration and management, Aviso Wealth is an ambitious organization backed by the collective strength of its owners: the credit union Centrals, Co-operators/CUMIS, and Desjardins. For more information visit [aviso.ca](http://aviso.ca).

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